



H.E.L.P. 2009
HEALTH EMERGENCIES IN LARGE POPULATIONS

13 July – 31 July 2009
East-West Center, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Honolulu, HI

PRESENTATION OF THE H.E.L.P. COURSE

The H.E.L.P. course: a multicultural and multidisciplinary learning experience.

The H.E.L.P. course was created in 1986 by the International Committee of the Red Cross to upgrade professionalism in humanitarian assistance programs conducted in emergency situations.

These courses have been given in various parts of Latin America, North America, Africa, Asia, Western and Eastern Europe. Since 1986, approximately 2000 health professionals and humanitarian aid workers from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, United Nations agencies, NGOs, ministries of health, armed forces medical services and academic institutions have attended the course.

A joint effort

The course is organized in partnership with academic institutions, WHO (World Health Organization), PAHO (Pan-American Health Organization), WMA (World Medical Association), and National Red Cross Societies. Our current academic partners are:

In Ouidah, Benin:
Institut régional de Santé Publique

In Pretoria, South Africa:
University of Pretoria, School of Health Systems and Public Health

In Baltimore, USA:
Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health and School of Medicine

In Honolulu/Hawaii, USA:
Center of Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance and The

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

In Geneva, Switzerland:
University of Geneva, Faculty of Medicine

In Cuernavaca, Mexico:
Instituto Nacional de Salud Publica Cruz Roja Mexicana

Japan :
The Japanese Red Cross Kyusho International University of Nursing

Goals

The H.E.L.P. course comprises two modules indissociable. The first two weeks focus on public health activities and the third week deals with international humanitarian law, human rights, the responsibilities of health professionals, and ethics.

H.E.L.P. I Health Emergencies in Large Populations

The purpose of the first module is to provide the public health tools necessary for making appropriate decisions in emergency situations involving large populations. During the course the participants are encouraged to share their field experiences. The course prepares the ground for common approaches to public health among humanitarian organizations, thus contributing to better program coordination in emergency operations.

H.E.L.P. II Health, Ethics, Law and Policies

The second module examines the health-related ethical issues that arise in humanitarian activities. It provides an overview of the main legal instruments, particularly international humanitarian law and human rights law, professional codes and declarations that are the basis for decision-making in humanitarian operations that respect the dignity of the victims they seek to assist.

H.E.L.P. I – HEALTH EMERGENCIES IN LARGE POPULATIONS

Planning

An overview of the main steps of the planning process provides the participants with common terminology.

Topics include:

- identification of health problems;
- identification of constraints;

- selection of priorities;
- determination of objectives and strategies;
- mobilization of resources;
- implementation of activities;
- evaluation of results.

This planning methodology is applied throughout the course.

Nutrition and economic security

Malnutrition, lack of income and lack of economic security at household level are serious problems in emergency situations. An insufficient food supply and increased poverty create significant health risks. Proper planning for program implementation, adequate surveillance and effective assessment of needs and constraints are essential for a pragmatic and realistic assistance program.

The course focuses on the following:

- nutritional evaluation, including assessment of vitamin and micronutrient deficiencies, sampling techniques for surveillance, data collection and anthropometrics measurements;
- household security evaluations and rapid rural assessment methods;
- methodical guidelines for planning, implementation and surveillance of general and specific food-aid operations and feeding centers.

Environmental health

Survival without water is impossible.

The provision of an adequate supply of safe water is an absolute priority in any emergency action. Poor hygiene, overcrowding and pests are the main killers during emergencies.

The course addresses:

- environmental conditions favoring the occurrence and persistence of various pathogens;
- basic methods for emergency water supply, black water treatment, garbage disposal, vector control, emergency shelter and energy assistance.

Communicable disease control

Control of communicable diseases is a major problem in disaster situations, especially where large concentrations of people are living in precarious conditions of hygiene.

The course covers:

- strategies for controlling the main communicable diseases (diarrheal diseases, malaria, cholera, tuberculosis, measles, tetanus, intestinal parasites, HIV/AIDS, etc.);
- integration of various fields of activity such as environmental health, health promotion, community participation, disease prevention and basic medical care, bearing in mind the constraints that are part of any disaster situation.

Health care services

Disasters are characterized by a heavy demand for curative care, which may overwhelm existing health services. But prevention of illness and injury is also a key component of primary health care services in emergencies, and should be closely integrated with curative services. Special consideration must be given to vulnerable groups such as women and children. Reproductive health and management of childhood illnesses are major challenges during crisis situations.

The course addresses:

- basic understanding of health care systems;
- support for existing health care facilities;
- creation of new facilities such as hospitals, clinics, mobile teams;
- essential drug programs and drug donations;
- establishing child survival measures;
- reducing risks of maternal mortality;
- meeting reproductive health needs.

Mental health

The humanitarian organizations have become increasingly aware of the mental health needs which emerge among victims of disasters. This is a problem that was neglected for too long, and it is now a must to address it in a professional manner.

Participants therefore learn:

- to define the basics of the concept of mental health;
- to recognize the basic characteristics of mental health in individuals and communities;
- to know the differences between mental health problems and mental diseases;
- to identify factors that affect mental health and that give rise to mental health problems in conflict situations and among refugees and displaced populations, and to address priority needs;
- to identify the main resources for implementation of emergency mental health assistance programs;
- to identify priority target groups for mental health assistance.

Health information systems and epidemiology

Epidemiology is an essential tool in any relief operation. In an emergency situation the initial health assessment, the monitoring of assistance programs and the evaluation of the impact of the relief operation must be documented by an effective health information system.

Basic epidemiological tools are reviewed:

- definition of epidemiological terms;
- selection of health indicators in emergency situations;
- methods of data collection in emergencies;
- data analysis;
- establishment of surveillance and health information systems.

Health systems

Health systems in emergencies encompass environmental engineering, food and household economic security measures, primary health care, mental health and curative and preventive secondary health care services. These include community-based services as well as the international relief response. All these components together form a comprehensive health system.

During the course special attention is given to examining the interaction between these components and identifying the key elements needed to improve the functioning of health systems in emergency situations.

H.E.L.P. II – HEALTH ETHICS, LAW AND POLICIES

Dilemmas faced by health professionals in humanitarian operations

Health professionals have to make difficult choices in armed conflicts. Some examples:

- triage of the wounded;
- deciding on the appropriate level of health care;
- providing assistance when there is limited control over its delivery;
- providing assistance in poor security situations;
- providing assistance in situations where it may facilitate violation of fundamental human rights;
- dealing with evidence of torture and mutilation used as means of punishment.

To help professionals take appropriate decisions on such matters, the relevant instruments in the fields of international humanitarian law, human rights and health ethics are studied.

International humanitarian law

International humanitarian law (IHL) forms a major part of international law. It comprises the rules, which, in times of armed conflict, protect persons who are not or no longer involved in the fighting, and restrict the methods and means of warfare employed.

The course focuses on:

- application of IHL in international and non-international armed conflicts, and its applicability in new types of conflicts;
- identification of the main rules relating to the protection of health;
- rules for the protection of health professionals;
- the latest developments of IHL, specifically in the field of new weapons;
- the role of the ICRC in promoting and developing IHL;
- the use of the Red Cross/Red Crescent emblem.

Health and human rights

The interrelation between health and human rights is widely reflected in international conventions and agreements. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the UN General Assembly Declaration on the Principles of Medical Ethics relevant to the Role of Health Personnel in the Protection of Prisoners and Detainees against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

An overview is given of these major legal instruments, with particular reference to:

- the “hard core” of the human rights instruments;
- the complementary roles of IHL and human rights law;
- the advantages of monitoring human rights from the health perspective.

Professional ethics and health

Ethics should play a predominant role in the development and implementation of health policy, so as to ensure equity, gender sensitivity, and respect for fundamental rights. Health policy should aim to empower people affected by disasters to become self-sufficient. An overview of the main ethical theories and approaches is given, and the main instruments governing ethics in the health professions are considered.

The course includes:

- a review of the main resolutions of the World Medical Association (WMA);
- identification of the principal ethical rules which are applicable in armed conflicts and dictate the behavior of health professionals;
- consideration of the cultural values of victims and those of societies.

Responsibilities of health professionals in armed conflicts

The work of health professionals involves a wide range of responsibilities that go beyond just treating the sick and wounded, preventing disease and maintaining health. The course focuses on other responsibilities such as:

- preventing consequences of armed conflict which may have a major impact on health (e.g. the use of unlawful means of warfare, forced population displacements);
- identifying ethical dilemmas;
- making ethically correct decisions on health-related issues;
- protecting individuals from torture and mutilation;
- restricting the development and use of certain weapons;
- monitoring the health status of populations living under economic sanctions;
- forging a link between health and peace.

Participants consider how they can influence health policies within their own organizations to ensure better respect for ethical standards during relief activities. They also examine possible means of cooperation with professionals from other disciplines, such as lawyers, so that lessons learned from the health perspective can serve as the basis for the development of legal instruments.

TEACHING CONCEPTS AND METHODS

The course concentrates on concepts and approaches which have proved to be relevant for humanitarian field activities during emergency situations.

Various teaching methods, including lectures, and group discussions are used. An important part of the course is reserved for case studies, on a simulated case during H.E.L.P. I and on actual situations in H.E.L.P. II.

Participants are invited to share their personal experiences as well as their cultural background.

Course dates, registration, fees and credits

For course dates, registration fees and credits please refer to the specific information leaflets on the different courses.

Working languages

The courses in Geneva, Pretoria, Japan, Baltimore and Honolulu are given in English.

The course in Ouidah/Benin is given in French.

The course in Cuernavaca is given in Spanish.

Participants

A total of 129 different nationalities and over 20 different professions have been

represented in H.E.L.P. courses.

The course is intended first and foremost for health professionals: doctors, nurses, nutritionists, environmental health engineers, epidemiologists, and public health officers.

Other professionals holding decision-making positions in assistance or emergency programs are also welcome.

Candidates working in countries affected by war or natural disasters will be given special consideration.

The target number of participants is 25. Certificates of attendance are issued to all participants at the end of the course.

H.E.L.P. Course Calendar 2009:

To view the entire H.E.L.P. Course calendar please go to the ICRC web page located at the following:

http://www.icrc.org/Web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/help_course?OpenDocument#a5

If the link does not work go to: <http://www.icrc.org>

Type **HELP Course** into the search box and it will take you to the course information.

Teaching Concepts and Methods:

The course encompasses twelve interrelated fields, which cover most activities involved in emergency situations. As it is impossible to deal with all topics extensively within a restricted period of time, the program will establish certain priority subjects. These will be chosen for their relevance to the different fields and presented through various teaching methods, including lectures and group discussions.

The participants' progress will be ensured by regular evaluation of the knowledge acquired during the course. The number of participants will be limited to 30. A certificate of completion will be issued to all participants at the end of the course.

The Hawai'i course will take place at:

East-West Center, Imin International Conference Center, on the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa campus – Honolulu, Hawaii from 13 July – 31 July 2009.

Selection of Candidates and Registration:

The course is intended for health professionals: physicians, medical doctors, nurses, nutritionists, environmental health engineers, epidemiologists, public health officers, and medical planners. Candidates who are professional field workers not directly related to health, but having a sufficient understanding of health problems, will also be considered.

Candidates from countries affected by war and natural disasters will be given special consideration.

Registration fees amount to \$1500.00. Minimal living expenses for a three-week period using **dormitory accommodations** on the University of Hawaii campus should amount to an additional \$2,200.00.

Scholarships:

Scholarships, full and partial, are awarded on a case-by-case basis. If you are interested in obtaining a scholarship, please indicate so on the HELP application under "Sponsorship".

Obtaining University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Graduate Credits:

We are pleased to announce that The Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (COE-DMHA) and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa have become partners for the ICRC Health Emergencies in Large Populations (H.E.L.P.) Course. What this means to our perspective participants for the Course to be held 13 - 31 July 2009, is that Graduate Level University units (3 credits) are now available for those who desire to enroll with the U of H Outreach College.

There are two options for perspective participants:

1. The first option is that after attending the H.E.L.P. Course you receive a Certificate of Completion identifying you as having completed the H.E.L.P. Course. There is no additional registration or cost involved for this option. This option is completed through COE-DMHA. If you have been accepted to the 2009 H.E.L.P. Course this option is complete.
2. The second option is to receive not only the Certificate of Completion, but also graduate level units (credits (3)) and a transcript from U of H when the participant has successfully completed the Course. This is an additional cost that must be paid by the participant above and beyond any scholarship that COE-DMHA has provided. The tuition is \$987.00 USD (that is \$329.00 per unit/credit) and will be paid separately to the University at the time of registration for enrollment in the H.E.L.P. Course as part of the Outreach College of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Please Note: COE-DMHA cannot pay for the additional cost to obtain the graduate level units (credits) and transcript. This additional cost must be paid by the participant or by the participant's organization.

If you wish to register/enroll at U of H to receive graduate level units (credits) and are willing to pay for this option, please fill out that section on the Course application. We will forward your name and contact information to a representative at the University of Hawai'i who will then contact you and assist in the registration/enrollment procedures. For questions please contact either Mr. Sean Nakamura or Dr. William Kanour at COE-DMHA as soon as possible.

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